

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT LAND EXCHANGE

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1113) to authorize an exchange of land at Fort Frederica National Monument, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Page 2, line 2 strike out "any other provision of law" and insert "section 5(b) of Public Law 90-401 (16 U.S.C. 4601-22(b))".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1113.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

□ 1600

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1113, as amended, was introduced by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) and would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey 6 acres of land within the boundaries of the Fort Frederica National Monument on St. Simons Island, Georgia, to the Christ Church, also located on St. Simons Island. In return, the National Park Service would receive 8.7 acres of nearby property that would be acquired by the church from the Sea Island Company and then exchanged with the Park Service. The exchange is viewed by all parties as a win-win.

Christ Church has doubled in size in the last 9 years, and the additional land is needed for its expansion. In return, the monument would receive lands that are known to contain valuable archaeological remains from the colonial period.

I urge adoption of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1113, which authorizes a land ex-

change at Fort Frederica National Monument in Georgia, has been amended by the Senate to clarify that the proposed land exchange is only exempt from a narrow and specific provision of law.

Even with the passage of this legislation, there is much work left to be done with this proposed exchange. Appraisals and archaeological surveys of the lands in question have not been completed. As such, the value and historic significance of the proposed lands have not been established.

Furthermore, the National Park Service testified that the noncontiguous parcel that would be acquired through the exchange will likely increase the administrative and operational costs of the national monument necessitating an evaluation of this question as well.

It is important to note that H.R. 1113 authorizes but does not require a land exchange at Fort Frederica National Monument. Before any exchange could occur, the National Park Service would be required to complete appraisals and historical surveys, as well as comply with the requirements of NEPA and the National Park Service management standards. These legal and administrative procedures are in place to ensure that the exchange, if it does go forward, is in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, that being the case, we do not object to consideration of H.R. 1113, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1113.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

HIGHLANDS CONSERVATION ACT

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1964) to assist the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in conserving priority lands and natural resources in the Highlands region, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment: Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Highlands Conservation Act".

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to recognize the importance of the water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region, and the national significance of the Highlands region to the United States;

(2) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to work in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to the Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region; and

(3) to continue the ongoing Forest Service programs in the Highlands region to assist the Highlands States, local units of government, and private forest and farm landowners in the conservation of land and natural resources in the Highlands region.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **HIGHLANDS REGION.**—The term "Highlands region" means the area depicted on the map entitled "The Highlands Region", dated June 2004, including the list of municipalities included in the Highlands region, and maintained in the headquarters of the Forest Service in Washington, District of Columbia.

(2) **HIGHLANDS STATE.**—The term "Highlands State" means—

- (A) the State of Connecticut;
- (B) the State of New Jersey;
- (C) the State of New York; and
- (D) the State of Pennsylvania.

(3) **LAND CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT.**—The term "land conservation partnership project" means a land conservation project—

- (A) located in the Highlands region;
- (B) identified by the Forest Service in the Study, the Update, or any subsequent Pennsylvania and Connecticut Update as having high conservation value; and
- (C) in which a non-Federal entity acquires land or an interest in land from a willing seller to permanently protect, conserve, or preserve the land through a partnership with the Federal Government.

(4) **NON-FEDERAL ENTITY.**—The term "non-Federal entity" means—

- (A) any Highlands State; or
- (B) any agency or department of any Highlands State with authority to own and manage land for conservation purposes, including the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

(5) **STUDY.**—The term "Study" means the New York-New Jersey Highlands Regional Study conducted by the Forest Service in 1990.

(6) **UPDATE.**—The term "Update" means the New York-New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 Update conducted by the Forest Service.

(7) **PENNSYLVANIA AND CONNECTICUT UPDATE.**—The term "Pennsylvania and Connecticut Update" means a report to be completed by the Forest Service that identifies areas having high conservation values in the States of Connecticut and Pennsylvania in a manner similar to that utilized in the Study and Update.

SEC. 4. LAND CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.

(a) **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED PROJECTS.**—Each year, the governors of the Highlands States, with input from pertinent units of local government and the public, may—

(1) jointly identify land conservation partnership projects in the Highlands region from land identified as having high conservation values in the Study, the Update, or the Pennsylvania and Connecticut Update that shall be proposed for Federal financial assistance; and

(2) submit a list of those projects to the Secretary of the Interior.